

Written Statement of Congressman Bruce Poliquin (ME-2)

Submitted to the U.S. International Trade Commission on July 17, 2018

Thank you, Chairman Johanson, Commissioners Williamson, Broadbent, and Schmittlein for giving me this opportunity to speak up on behalf of my constituents at the pulp and paper mill in Rumford, Maine. These 620 hard-working Mainers are some of the most dedicated and skilled workers in the world. They produce some of the finest pulp and paper in the world.

The workers at the Rumford mill are a proud part of Maine's---and America's---manufacturing sector AND an important ingredient in the U.S. economy.

As a boy, I grew up in the bustling mill towns of Central Maine. The Penobscot, Kennebec and Androscoggin Rivers were dotted with dozens of thriving paper, textile, leather, and shoe factories. It seemed like everybody's dad or mom worked in the mills. These were good-paying jobs and came with healthcare and retirement benefits. Our families were proud and independent, and our neighborhoods and schools were filled with kids.

My grandmother stitched the best shirts in the world at Hathaway Shirt Company in Waterville. My late brother spun the finest yarn available at the Cascade Woolen Mill in Oakland. I worked the night shift at the Wyndot Spinning Mill in Sydney to get through school. "Making things" has been the manufacturing backbone of Maine's economy for generations. Sadly, today, most of our mills and factories are boarded up. Factors such as smothering taxes, punitive regulations, and high energy costs have killed our jobs.

When that happens, it devastates our families and communities. Neighbors are forced to pack up and leave where they grew up. Some are pushed onto welfare. High schools shrink, and the collection baskets at church see quarters instead of dollars. Hospitals close and the corner store no longer has enough traffic to stay open.

Thankfully, we are here today not because operations such as the Rumford mill have done anything wrong. Quite the opposite. Such operations in the United States give us hope. They are a bright spot in American manufacturing, and they support American printers and publishers. They produce world-class products and they play-by-the-rules. And, in doing so, support good-paying career jobs with benefits. Such companies and the Americans they employ are truly the backbone of our economy.

We are here today because, one small company in Washington State is trying to manipulate our trade system to slap high tariffs on uncoated papers—mostly used for newsprint-- coming into the United States.

The irony is that these tariffs are and will harm the same U.S. paper industry they are supposed to protect. They will cause permanent harm to newspapers, printers and book publishers, destroying the U.S. paper industry's customer base – the same customers supplied by the Rumford mill. This is not the way Congress intended the trade laws to work.

It is true that in some cases tariffs can help U.S. producers by raising prices. In this unique case, however, a price increase will only exacerbate and quicken the already declining customer base for paper products in the United States.

This will force businesses like the Rumford mill to lay off workers, hurting not only those workers and their families, but the entire communities in which they are located. With all due respect, the mission of your distinguished Commission is to stand-up for American workers. Today, you have a chance to help an industry who plays by the rules. We need a government that stands strong and works for us – not one that looks the other way and allows a frivolous claim to destroy an entire industry.

On behalf of our honest, hard-working families throughout Maine's 2nd Congressional District, I ask you today to do what's right and to do what's fair.

Thank you!